

"LITTLETON-PETTIT HOUSE"  
Memphis, Shelby County,  
Tennessee.

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PHOTOGRAPHS  
WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA  
District of Tennessee

Historic American Buildings Survey  
J. Frazer Smith, District Officer,  
W. Jeter Eason, Deputy District Officer,  
404 Goodwyn Institute Bldg.,  
Memphis, Tennessee.

"LITTLETON-PETTIT HOUSE"  
Memphis, Shelby County, Tennessee.

Owner. Pettit Estate. ( Occupant - Miss Lucy Pettit,  
436 Beale Avenue )

Date of Erection. 1848.

Architect. Unknown, if any.

Builder. H. A. Littleton. (Some question as to actual builder but most indications tend to make Mr. Littleton the builder.)

Present Condition. The house is slowly falling into ruin although it is at present occupied. The interior rooms are in fairly good state of preservation, but the siding, cornices, columns porches, in fact, practically all exterior parts of the house are receiving little, if any, attention. Such repairs as are necessary to keep the wind and rain from entering through the windows and roof are being done. The only changes that have been brought about since the erection of the house are such minor changes as the installation of bath rooms and wiring for electricity. All the major rooms of the house are intact and though they are not used for the same purpose, they are practically as built. The kitchen and service wing of the house to the left rear are being used for their intended purpose, however, stoves replace the open fireplace for cooking.

Number of Stories. The entire house and wing - two stories, and due to the topography of the lot there is a full basement above the ground under the service wing.

Materials of Construction. Foundations are of brick pier construction with brick curtain walls between the piers beneath the exterior walls. All of the walls of the house are of wood stud construction, the exterior walls being covered with clapboard siding. Floors are made of hand hewn timber and sills covered with random width pine flooring. Walls are covered with plaster and where cornices occur they are of molded plaster - one example being quite elaborate in the parlors. Ballusters and trim and rail around the stairway are solid mahogany - very beautiful example of Venetian etched glass occurs in the side lights of the front entrance. One side has been broken out and replaced

with red glass, not etched, but the other side is intact as shown by one of the accompanying photographs. The roof, we are told, was originally of hand split shingles, but has been replaced by galvanized iron, raised seam type. The large columns on the front porch are hollow wood construction, surmounted by cast iron Corinthian Capitals; the weight however, of the portico being carried by six inch square walnut members inside the hollow columns.

Other Existing Records. The only other publication that we know of that includes this house is "The History of Homes and Gardens of Tennessee" published by the Parthenon Press of Nashville for the Garden Study Club of Nashville.

Additional Data. This is one of the few formal town houses remaining in Memphis which was built during the period of luxury and splendor that flourished in the South prior to the war. There is very little history that can be associated with this house although we are told that certain Generals visited or stayed in the house during the war, and that one of the early Pettits was a Colonel during the Civil War. Its part was more one of social activity as it seems that one of the most exclusive and brilliant balls of the year was the New Year's Ball at the Pettits'. It was here that many of Memphis' most prominent people were entertained. It stands today in the center of a degenerated neighborhood and surrounded by the antithesis of its original surroundings, and is one of the last reminders of the glory that once was Beale Street.



Rev. Oct. 6. 36 H.C.